



*For Immediate Release*

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## **HYDROLOGISTS ADVISE RESIDENTS TO EXPECT LOWER LAKE LEVELS**

July 7, 2011 -- According to the National Weather Service, Texas is currently experiencing one of the worst droughts in recorded history. The US Drought Monitor classified about 70 percent of the state and most of the Brazos River basin as being in "exceptional" drought conditions as of June 29. This is the most severe category on the scale.

For most of the State of Texas, the drought of record occurred in the 1950's following several consecutive years of drought conditions. While many areas of the state are expected to surpass record drought levels this summer, Brazos River Authority hydrologists are advising that if current conditions persist residents should expect decreased river flows and lower lake levels.

"Though the current water supply in the Brazos River Authority system is at 82 percent, the exceptional drought conditions that began last fall are starting to take a toll on water supplies throughout the basin," said Brad Brunett, Authority Water Services manager. Most areas are anywhere from 12 to 20+ inches below normal rainfall for the period from October 2010 through June 2011.

"With the extremely dry conditions, the amount of water flowing in the river has been very low for several months now," said Brunett. "We have been releasing water from most of our system reservoirs to meet water supply needs throughout the basin," Brunett said.

The lower river flows and lake levels are due, not only to a lack of rain, but increased water use and high rates of evaporation. "We've seen unusually high temperatures for this time of summer," said Brunett. "The extremely windy conditions have also added to very high rates of evaporation."

According to Senior Hydrologist Chris Higgins, weather conditions have resulted in large losses of water. "For example, on Lake Granbury the hot, windy days with low humidity have resulted in losses of about 300 acre-feet in one day which is about a ½ inch drop in the lake level," said Higgins. "Adding these high evaporation rates to increased water use and extended drought conditions, we have to expect water levels will drop."

To put this into perspective, 300 acre-feet of evaporation lost equals 97.8 million gallons of water or:

- 148 Olympic-sized swimming pools,
- 1.96 million bath tubs full of water,
- 61.09 million toilet flushes or
- 4.88 million loads of laundry.

As reservoir levels drop, the Authority cautions that boat docks and ramps may become unusable. For those with docks, consider removing your boat from the water to dry dock and utilize boat ramps where available. Boat ramp closings will be posted on the Authority web site as they occur. For questions, call 888-922-6272.

Additional information and graphics are available at <http://www.brazos.org/DroughtStatus.asp>

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#### ***About the Brazos River Authority***

The Brazos River Authority, with headquarters in Waco, is the oldest river authority in Texas. Created by the Texas Legislature in 1929, the Authority's 42,000 square-mile territory includes all or part of 70 counties; extending from the Texas-New Mexico border west of Lubbock to the Gulf of Mexico near Freeport.

The Authority built, owns, and operates three reservoirs (Lakes Possum Kingdom, Granbury, and Limestone). In addition to these water supply reservoirs, the Authority contracts with the Corps of Engineers for the water supply storage space at eight federal multi-purpose flood control and water conservation reservoirs (Lakes Whitney, Belton, Proctor, Somerville, Stillhouse Hollow, Granger, Georgetown and Aquilla).

The Brazos River Authority owns and operates a regional wastewater system for the cities of Temple-Belton. The Authority also operates wastewater treatment plants for the cities of Georgetown, Dime Box, Clute-Richwood and Sugar Land. Through an alliance with the Lower Colorado River Authority, the Brazos River Authority operates wastewater treatment plants at Brushy Creek Regional Wastewater System in Round Rock, the city of Hutto and the city of Liberty Hill.

The Authority owns and operates water treatment systems at Lake Granbury (which supplies potable water to wholesale customers in Hood and Johnson Counties), and the City of Taylor. The Authority also operates a potable water treatment plant for the City of Dime Box. A water treatment plant for the City of Leander is operated by the Brazos River Authority through an alliance with the Lower Colorado River Authority.

The Authority also engages in water quality monitoring activities throughout the Brazos River basin. As a member of the Texas Clean River Program, the Authority samples and tests water from 157 locations throughout the basin on either a monthly or quarterly basis.

For further information on the Brazos River Authority, please contact Judi Pierce, Public Information Officer at 254-761-3103.